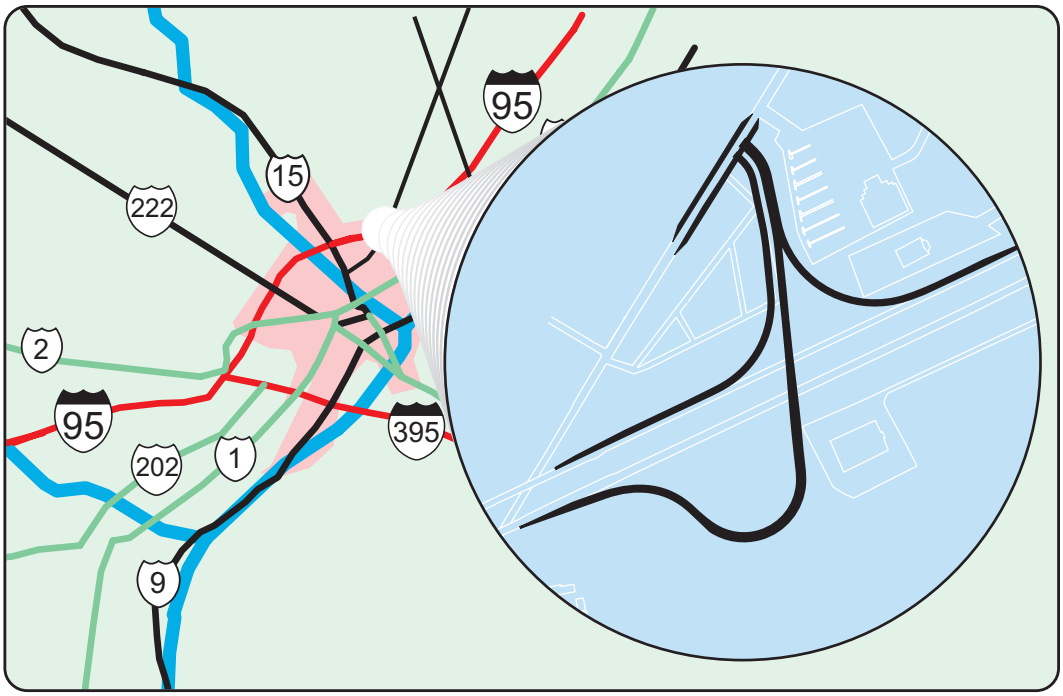

I-95 Interchange with Stillwater Avenue, City of Bangor
PIN 4926.00, Federal # IR-I-IM-NH-95-8(155)
Penobscot County, Maine

Final Environmental Assessment

and Finding of No Significant Impact

March 1999

Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2)(c),
and 23 CFR 771 by:

U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration

Maine Department of
Transportation

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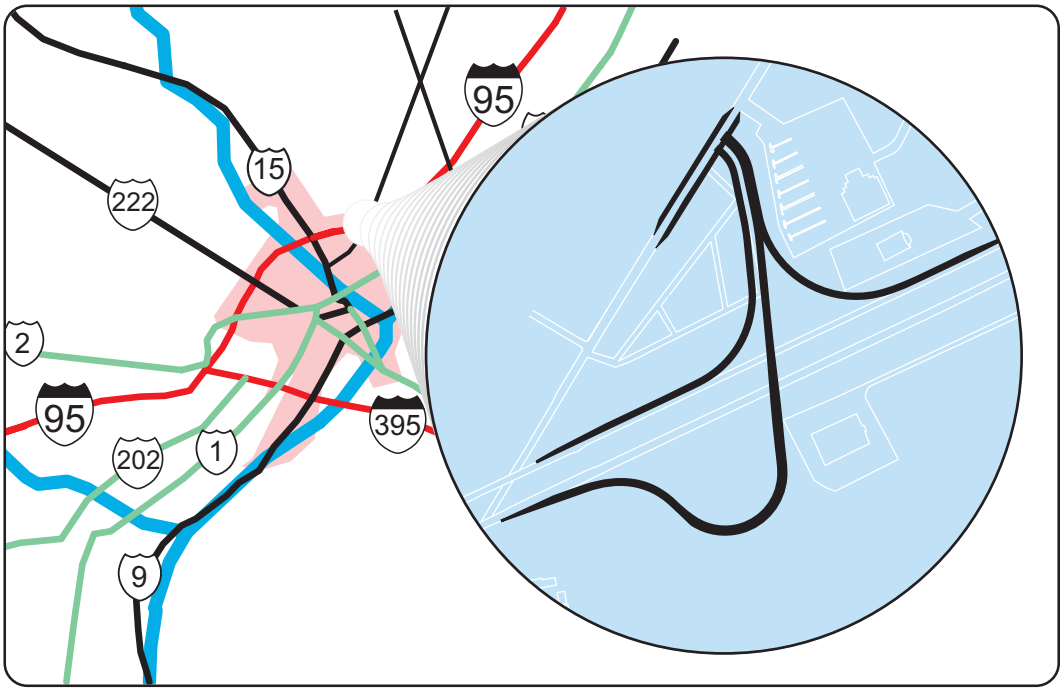

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

and

Maine Department of Transportation

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Interstate 95 Interchange with Stillwater Avenue, City of Bangor
Penobscot County, Maine
Federal Project No. IR-I-IM-NH-95-8(155)

Description of Action

The Maine Department of Transportation proposes to construct a new highway interchange between Interstate 95 (I-95) and Stillwater Avenue in the city of Bangor, Penobscot County, Maine. The project will provide for a 3/4 trumpet interchange. No access is provided from Stillwater Avenue to the northbound lanes of I-95.

The interchange is needed to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion at the I-95/Hogan Road interchange for present and projected vehicle traffic volumes. The interchange provides the primary access to the Bangor Mall and adjacent shopping areas. This major regional retail and commercial area has experienced strong growth in recent years and conforms to the City's growth management plans. That growth has resulted in a serious incidence of traffic congestion at three intersections of the Hogan Road interchange, area's only access to the adjacent Interstate highway. The proposed interchange will link I-95 directly with Stillwater Avenue, and will reduce congestion at the I-95 / Hogan Road interchange area by providing alternative Interstate access to the Bangor Mall area south of Hogan Road.

The environmental assessment tracks the selection of the proposed action through an alternatives analysis process that included fourteen preliminary alternatives. They encompass a range of upgrade, partial and full interchange options, which ultimately yields a *no-build*, and four *build*, alternatives. Of the final four build alternatives, three were dropped because of high cost or unacceptable environmental impacts. The final decision to be made is between the No-Build Alternative and the remaining Build Alternative, described as Alternative 4. Alternative 4 is considered the Preferred Alternative as a result of the analysis described in the Environmental Assessment.

Environmental Issues

The study area is an essentially suburban part of the city of Bangor. It is characterized by a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional land uses with small areas of wetland, forest, and scrub-shrub vegetation.

The Preferred Alternative will not adversely impact agricultural resources of the area. The project will affect land that was once prime farmland soils, but are now surrounded by commercial and other development. The affected tracts are small and are adjacent to the I-95 right-of-way. As a practical matter, these soils are no longer likely to be used for agricultural production.

The Preferred Alternative will not negatively effect business and employment in the area. It will indirectly influence the anticipated growth of these activities. Without traffic improvements as proposed, the development of new business activity in the area was threatened under the growth

limitions of the Maine Site Location of Development Law (38 MRSA 481-490).

There are no adverse air quality impacts associated with this project.

Wetlands are located in the study area. The location and preliminary design of alternatives minimized the impacts to wetlands from a number of acres in early alternatives to 0.5 acre in the Preferred Alternative. Further reduction of wetland impacts will be a continuing objective during final design activities. Compensation for wetland impacts will be developed in consultation with Federal and State environmental resource agencies. A potential wetland mitigation site has been identified and determined to be acceptable to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

Future noise levels at certain receptors will exceed state and federal criteria under both the no-build and the build alternatives Future noise levels will, however, be less under the Preferred Alternative at all receptors than would be the case if no action is taken. Noise barriers were considered to mitigate this effect but are judged not to be feasible and reasonable measures in this location.

Traffic studies indicate the Preferred Alternative is a contributory solution to the congestion at Hogan Road and I-95, but not the sole or final solution. The studies show that by the year 2025 the Hogan Road intersection with be essentially at a standstill (Level of Service F) for many periods of the day no action is taken at this time. With the construction of the Preferred Alternative highway capacity will greatly increase and congestion diminish, but by the year 2025 the Hogan Road interchanges will decrease to a Level of Service E if no other action is taken.

Conclusion

The Preferred Alternative best accomplishes the project's purpose at the least cost to the balanced needs of the natural, social, and cultural environment of the project area. With implementation of the wetland mitigation measures discussed above, I have determined that construction of the Preferred Alternative within the city of Bangor, Maine will have no significant impact on the natural or human environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact is based on the project's environmental assessment and associated studies. These documents have been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately discuss the need, environmental issues and impacts, and appropriate mitigation measures. The environmental assessment provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached document.

March 18, 1999

Date

Paul L. Lariviere
Division Administrator, Maine
Federal Highway Administration

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AADT	average annual daily traffic
ac	acre
BACTS	Bangor Area Coprehensive Transportation Study
dBA	decibel — A-weighted to simulate the response of the human ear to noise.
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHPM	Federal-Aid Highway Program Manual
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FPPA	Farmlands Protection Policy Act
ft., ft.^{2}	feet, square feet
ha	hectare
km	kilometer(s)
m, m^2	meter(s), square meters
MDEP	Maine Department of Environmental Protection
MDIFW	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
MDOT	Maine Department of Transportation
MHPC	Maine Historic Preservation Commission
mi.	miles
MNAP	Maine Natural Areas Program
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAC	noise abatement criteria
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRPA	Natural Resource Protection Act
NSA	noise sensitive area
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
STPA	Sensible Transportation Policy Act
USACOE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA-NRCS	U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	underground storage tank
VPD	vehicles per day